

CLAIMS

1. An interactive gaming and audiovisual transmission system comprising a central gaming computer means for processing gaming data, a decoder adapted to receive gaming data from the central gaming computer together with transmitted audiovisual data, the decoder further including a card reading device for interacting with a user's bank card in order to credit a gaming account held by the central gaming computer means in response to a transfer of credit from the user's bank account.
2. An interactive gaming and audiovisual transmission system as claimed in claim 1, in which the decoder is equipped with a card reading device in the form of a smart card reader.
3. An interactive gaming and audiovisual transmission system as claimed in claim 1 ~~or 2~~, in which the decoder is further equipped with a second card reading device
4. An interactive gaming and audiovisual transmission system as claimed in ~~any preceding~~ ¹claim, in which the decoder is adapted to obtain transfer of credit information in the form of an electronic certificate generated by the bank card in response to transaction data submitted by the decoder.
5. An interactive gaming and audiovisual transmission system as claimed in ~~any preceding~~ ¹claim, in which the decoder is provided with a handheld remote control, some or all of the data sent to the decoder being encrypted by the handheld remote control and subsequently decrypted by the decoder.
6. An interactive gaming and audiovisual transmission system as claimed in ~~any preceding~~ ¹claim, in which the decoder is adapted to transmit transfer of credit information from the decoder to a bank server via a network communication link.
7. An interactive gaming and audiovisual transmission system as claimed in claim

6 further comprising an intermediate communications server, adapted to receive transfer of credit information communicated from the decoder and to forward this information to a bank server.

5 8. An interactive gaming and audiovisual transmission system as claimed in claim 7 in which the intermediate communications server is adapted to communicate with the central gaming computer means.

10 9. An interactive gaming and audiovisual transmission system as claimed in ~~any~~ preceding claim ^I in which the central gaming computer means is adapted to receive and transmit credit information to or from a bank server via a network communication link.

15 10. An interactive gaming and audiovisual transmission system as claimed in ~~any~~ preceding claim ^I in which the decoder is adapted to communicate gaming information to the central gaming computer means during gaming operation via a network communication link.

20 11. An interactive gaming and audiovisual transmission system as claimed in claim 10 in which some or all of the gaming information communicated from the decoder to the central gaming computer means during gaming operation is encrypted by the decoder.

25 12. An interactive gaming and audiovisual transmission system as claimed in claim 10 ~~or 11~~, the system further comprising an intermediate communications server, adapted to receive information communicated from the decoder during gaming operation and to forward this information to the central gaming computer means.

30 13. An interactive gaming and audiovisual transmission system as claimed in claim 12, in which the intermediate communications server is adapted to decrypt encrypted gaming information received from the decoder and to re-crypt this information for subsequent communication to the central gaming computer means.

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14. An interactive gaming and audiovisual transmission system as claimed in claim 12 ~~or 13~~ in which the intermediate communications server is further adapted to communicate information to and from other servers.

15. An interactive gaming and audiovisual transmission system as claimed in ~~any~~ ¹preceding claim in which some or all of the gaming data sent from the central gaming computer means to the decoder is transmitted via a transmitter means used to transmit audiovisual data to the decoder.

16. An interactive gaming and audiovisual transmission system as claimed in ~~any~~ ¹preceding claim in which some or all of the gaming data sent from the central gaming computer to the decoder is sent via a network communication link.

17. An interactive gaming and audiovisual transmission system as claimed in ~~any~~ ¹preceding claim in which the central gaming computer is adapted to provide gaming data related to a real-time sporting event, the decoder being adapted to receive both gaming data and associated audiovisual data of the event.

18. An interactive gaming and audiovisual transmission system as claimed in ~~any~~ ¹preceding claim comprising a broadcast digital television system.

19. A gaming system for processing gaming data, comprising:
means for transmitting gaming data to a user's decoder;
means for receiving data from the user's decoder; and
means for connection to a bank server holding the user's bank account in order to transfer credit to or from the account.

20. A gaming system as claimed in Claim 19, including a gaming account held by the gaming system which can be credited in response to the transfer of credit.

21. A gaming system as claimed in Claim 19 ~~or 20~~, adapted to communicate with the decoder and the bank server via a communications server.

-29-

22. A gaming system as claimed in Claim 21, adapted to receive encrypted information from the communications server.

23. A gaming system as claimed in any of ^{Claim 19} ~~Claims 19 to 22~~, adapted to transmit gaming data related to a real-time sporting event.

24. An interactive gaming and audiovisual transmission system comprising a gaming system as claimed in any of ^{Claim 19} ~~Claims 19 to 23~~, said user's decoder, and said bank server.

25. A method of processing gaming data, said method comprising the steps of:
transmitting gaming data to a user's decoder;
receiving data from the user's decoder; and
connecting to a bank server holding the user's bank account in order to transfer credit to or from the account.

26. A method of controlling an interactive gaming and audiovisual transmission system, said method comprising the steps of:
processing gaming data at a central gaming computer means;
receiving the processed gaming data from the central gaming computer means together with transmitted audiovisual data; and
interacting with a user's bank card in order to credit a gaming account held by the central gaming computer means in response to a transfer of credit from the user's bank account.

27. An interactive gaming and audiovisual transmission system or a gaming system substantially as herein described with reference to Figure 4 of the accompanying drawings.

28. A method of processing gaming data or controlling an interactive gaming and audiovisual transmission system substantially as herein described.

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